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## Exploring the Regional and Internal Security Challenges at the Dawn of Musharraf Era

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### ABSTRACT

This study explores the structure of threats to internal and regional security that arose at the start of the Musharraf regime. This paper aims to provide a thorough analysis of challenging security situation that defined this important juncture in Pakistan's history. This study demonstrates the intricate interactions between geopolitical tensions, internal instability, and socioeconomic issues that influenced the security landscape during Musharraf's ascent to power. The period was characterized by a wide range of issues that required astute policymaking and strategic thinking, from border tensions to internal discontent. This study emphasizes how crucial it is to comprehend sociopolitical subtleties and historical circumstances while tackling today's security issues. Through a critical analysis of the Musharraf era, policymakers might develop more potent approaches to resolving contemporary security challenges. The study contributes in literature by offering an in-depth look at the security issues particular to the Musharraf regime's early years. This work is a vital contribution to the scholarly discourse on the dynamics of internal and regional security in Pakistan by combining multiple sources and delivering new insights.

**Keywords:** Regional Security, Internal Challenges, Pervez Musharraf, Geopolitical Dynamics, Policy Implications

### Introduction

Musharraf gained prominence when he became Army Chief during second tenure of Nawaz Sharif in October 1998. In 1999, he spearheaded the Kargil conflict, which nearly escalated into a full-scale war between both rivals, India and Pakistan. Following a period of contentious interactions between Musharraf and Sharif, the Prime Minister made an unsuccessful endeavor to oust Army Chief from his position. In retaliation, the military orchestrated a coup d'état in 1999, imprisoned the Prime Minister under house arrest initially, and enabled Musharraf to assume control of Pakistan (Bell, 2016).

When Musharraf era began, it signaled the beginning of an era characterized by a convergence of threats to both domestic and regional security. Comprehending the nuances of this era, it is crucial to understanding Pakistan's that time of security scene, as the country was grappling with intricate geopolitical factors, internal and external turmoil. As South Asia's geopolitical environment changed after 9/11 and Pakistan gained international attention when it joined the US led War on Terror as a frontline state (Bashir, 2022).

In the same year, Musharraf assumed the office of leader of the military government and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, while also serving as the Chief of the Army Staff (Behuria, 2009). Despite relinquishing the office of chairman of joint chiefs in 2001, he continued to serve as the Army Chief until his retirement from the army in 2007. He assumed the office of President on June 20, 2001, following a controversial referendum on May 1, 2002. In October 2002, general elections were held in which the army-supported party, PML-Q, emerged victorious (Shah, 2008).

In 2002, he restored the constitution with significant modifications with the implementation of the LFO. Throughout his Presidency, he promoted a moderate approach that combined conservative and left-wing ideologies. He successfully evaded multiple assassination attempts. He selected Shaukat Aziz as Prime Minister and implemented programs to combat terrorism, establishing himself as a significant participant in war on terror. Additionally, he moved toward social liberalism with his enlightened moderation initiative, while simultaneously advocating for economic liberalization and prohibiting trade unions. A significant increase of around 50% in the overall GDP was witnessed but a drop in domestic savings and a sharp surge in economic inequality was also viewed (Mahmood, 2001).

A number of domestic issues were faced by Musharraf government, such as unstable civil-military relations, religious extremism, and ethnic problems. These internal dynamics presented tremendous challenges in governance and intensified already-existing security dangers. Significantly, Pervez Musharraf had faced allegations of human rights violations. Furthermore, the Kashmir dispute was a hot spot, escalating hostilities across border with India.

In light of these, the study aims to analyze the complex security issues that characterized the Musharraf administration. The research endeavors to clarify that how intricate interplay of regional forces and internal elements molded Pakistan's security scene at this pivotal moment? How global factors, domestic dissatisfaction affected the government and what kind of governance techniques were adopted for modern security policy. The research is completed by scrutinizing primary sources, scholarly literature, and historical documents.

### **Major Step after Coup d'état**

On 12<sup>th</sup> day of October 1999, Premier Nawaz Sharif attempted to remove Pervez Musharraf from his position of Army Chief and replaced him with Lt-General Khwaja Ziauddin, who was a supporter of his family and the Director of ISI. However, the other corps commanders prevented him from assuming the office of Chief of Army Staff (Parveen & Zahoor, 2018). The national television experienced a temporary interruption in broadcasting and after a few hours, it was declared that the government of Nawaz Sharif had been sacked. Musharraf, aided by other generals, orchestrated the fourth coup in Pakistan by taking decision to not to declare Martial Law and announced for a new system in the near future.

On 14<sup>th</sup> of October, Musharraf declared emergency across Pakistan and took over the role of Chief Executive. He suspended the constitution, halted both Houses of Parliament and all Provincial Assemblies but left President Rafiq Tarar to remain in power. The widely recognized Provisional Constitution Order (PCO) was officially proclaimed and courts were prohibited to issue any order that would go in contradiction of Chief Executive. The Army Court tribunal was not authorized to pass judgment against the Army Chief or his appointed persons (Kamran, 2008).

Musharraf gave pronouncement based on the debates and resolutions of the Armed Forces Chiefs and Corps Commanders. This order specified that, notwithstanding the deferral of Constitution, Pakistan would continue to be bound by the directives of Chief Executive. The duration of the military rule was unspecified and military dictatorship had fully reestablished itself (Malik, 2001).

In addition, the military government had established a presence and influence in several areas of society, such as industry, business, agriculture, education, scientific research, healthcare, communications, and transportation by appointing military officials at major offices. Musharraf made army as the dominant force in controlling and allocating economic resources and wealth in the country. It also had significant control over the political system, which was not surprising because dictators often place their loyal supporters in crucial positions to ensure maximum control (Behuria, 2009).

### **Security Challenges during War on Terror**

Pakistan experienced a lot of repercussions due to its purported corporation with US in "War on Terror" (Akhtar, 2008). Upon joining the war against the Taliban and Al-Qaeda, the Pakistani Taliban continued their hostile actions against the Pakistani military and destroyed numerous girls' schools and other infrastructure in order to undermine Pakistan's stability (Khattak, 2018). Consequently, this posed a significant threat for Pakistan's security that caused the deployment of military to the tribal areas where terrorists were actively disrupting peace and stability. Moreover, the security was being jeopardized by non-state actors who were supported by international powers to instigate turmoil in the entire region as well as entire country later.

The situation in Baluchistan posed a significant security challenge for Pakistan due to the support received from India and other international powers. These external forces exacerbated the situation in the province through various means, including the targeted killing, suicidal bombings, and overall destabilization of the country. These actions were carried out in the province, which were unacceptable to the residents of the society, as they were specifically targeting the innocent public in Quetta (Denial, 2013).

Resultantly, the Pakistani military had initiated operation against the Baloch guerilla combatants. Baloch nationalists asserted that the security forces of Pakistan had abducted their political activists, students, and other nationalists, totaling 10,000 individuals. They further alleged that on a daily basis, bullet-riddled and mutilated corpses were discovered in various regions of the province that caused unrest (Nawaz, 2008).

Pakistan promptly joined international endeavors to combat terrorism because it was unavoidable due to various considerations, including geographical location, supply lines, and intelligence cooperation. Later on, Pakistan conducted multiple operations for removal of transnational extremists from tribal regions. In response to ongoing terrorism, the government was focused on conducting extensive operations to target and apprehend terrorists who were hiding in various locations. During 2001-2008, Pakistan implemented counterterrorism strategies that involved military operations, the banning of extremist organizations, the reforming of Madrasas, and the use of drone strikes (Roy & Rehman, 2019).

US played a dual role as the country by fostering the growth of Jihadists in Cold War by employing them inside Afghanistan to oppose the USSR but after 9/11 killed the same Jihadist as USA faced terrorism by attacks on World Trade Center (Gerges, 2009). The remnants of Jihadi and local insurgents as well as warlords were residing in Pakistani tribal areas that were adjacent to the Afghan border. Therefore, Pakistan had to assume the role of a coalition partner in war and had to make a significant and far-reaching decision. However, the decision led to peculiar and miscalculated circumstances as friends became enemies (Badalić, 2019).

Pakistan's leadership also endorsed this alliance's efforts to remove the Taliban administration in Afghanistan. The country played role in various aspects such as logistics, air bases, intelligence sharing, flight rights, and grant access to its air, naval, and land bases. Pakistan also pledged to eliminate domestic culprits that supported terrorism against Americans, cease all logistical

and diplomatic support to the Taliban (Jabeen, 2009). Despite facing security, economy, and political issues, Pakistan made a courageous decision to offer its services and land areas for worldwide operations to counter terrorists.

For eradication of Al-Qaeda's operations in Afghanistan as well as the Pakistan's tribal regions, the country strived with US but an unsettling and ill-judged aspect of this decision caused the US outbreak on Afghanistan, numerous militants associated with the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, Al-Qaeda, and the Taliban relocated to Pakistani tribal areas and sought shelter among the FATA's local tribes (Bird & Marshall, 2011). Due to this, the United States exerted pressure on Pakistan; leading to consecutive operations in FATA so Pakistani armed forces successfully apprehended and eliminated numerous militants during counterterrorism operations.

Pakistan implemented rigorous immigration control methods to halt and neutralize the militants' movement located in and conducting operations within Pakistan. By originating these measures, forces became able to kill or capture the major leaders of Taliban, Al-Qaeda, IMU, East Turkistan Islamic Movement and Punjabi Taliban (Burki, 2010). These tactics backfired and terrorists did high strikes in different sites. Resultantly, Pakistan had lost a lot of civilians as well as soldiers and economic loss. Without deep understanding about the local people, culture, historic traditions and consequences of military operations, Musharraf sent troops in FATA that yielded mixed results and Pakistan sacrificed hundreds of people. Despite this, military could not subdue local tribes and the outcomes were not as per calculations. Pakistan revised its Counter-Terrorism Strategy and chose to go for discussions so the first operation was stopped and a peace deal was reached between tribes, led by Nek Muhammad and Pakistan Army in 2004 at Shakai. However, the peace pact was destroyed by an American drone attack murdering the tribal leader Nek Muhammad (Abbasi, Khatwani, & Hussain, 2018). The US expressed dissatisfaction with this arrangement as it believed that the indigenous tribes led by Nek Muhammad were actively conducting attacks against NATO forces in Afghanistan. Due to this, the ties between residents and security forces were degraded which ultimately led into a conflict in FATA.

### **Military Operations**

Following the 'Operation Enduring Freedom 2001', a significant number of terrorists associated with Al-Qaeda, Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), East Turkistan Islamic Movement (ETIM), Taliban, Arabs, and Chechens sought shelter in Pakistan that caused concerns for Pakistan. Musharraf directed to initiate a military campaign known as Al-Mizan to combat insurgents by using the same approach acting in FATA (Khattak & Mushtaq, 2015). The objective of this operation was to monitor, locate, and focus the militants who were concealing in South Waziristan Agency. Lieutenant-General Safdar Hussain commanded Al-Mizan, which was carried out by the Frontier Corps and XI Corps.

Following Nek Mohammed's demise, Baitullah Mehsud assumed leadership of Taliban in South Waziristan Agency (Zaidi, 2008). In February 2005, following fierce conflict with the Baitullah Mehsud group, the government of Pakistan made a peace treaty with Baitullah Mehsud at Sararogha in which the military had committed to withdraw troops from Mehsud territory, provide compensation to the militants for their losses and station Frontier Corps personnel at the five forts in South Waziristan Agency (Abbas, 2010). With this deal, the Mehsud tribe effectively gained control of the territory but this peace treaty had a short-lived duration as previous treaties. Starting in early 2006, Mehsud initiated suicide bombings that continued until his demise in August 2009. The operation spanned four years and Pakistan Army apprehended numerous foreign militants associated with Al-Qaeda, IMU, and various other transnational organizations. The Al-Qaeda organization and associated groups experienced significant setbacks that resulted in a substantial disruption to its command and control system. Pakistan Army achieved a tactical win but terrorists regrouped and initiated attacks after 2006 (Jordan, 2014).

Musharraf's Counter-Terrorism Strategy was characterized by the use of force and relied heavily on military operations, neglecting the development, reconstruction, rehabilitation, and establishment of institutions. The resurgence of militants in 2007 could be attributed to the worsened socio-economic conditions, but the TTP had emerged as the most perilous group in FATA. Approximately 40 militant groups were consolidated under the leadership of Baitullah Mehsud that caused upsurge in terrorist assaults and disruption in country (Zaidi, A profile of Baitullah Mehsud, 2008).

In addition, TTP gained time and opportunity to establish its presence in several tribal agencies and volatile metropolitan areas significantly in Karachi. The densely populated areas provided opportunity to relocate these terrorists affiliated with the TTP and other proscribed groups (Shad & Ahmed, 2018). These groups acquired finances from Karachi and enlisting individuals who had extremist beliefs for the purpose of engaging in militant activities. The militants got engaged in several bank robberies, kidnappings for ransom, and extortion activities.

At that time General Musharraf's attentions were solely directed towards the tribal areas that resulted in the inability of government to effectively monitor the connections between terrorists and the TTP, which caused spread of Taliban in Karachi. The government was ill-equipped to handle Karachi due to absence of well-defined strategy. The terrorists received a continuous influx of funding and recruits, leading to a decline in the security situation in FATA.

In 2008, the government initiated a new operation called Zalzal, which was conducted in Spinkai, South Waziristan Agency with almost 10,000 military personnel actively engaged in the operation (Khalid & Roy, 2016). The operation was successfully accomplished as its declared objectives and managed to disrupt the militants, but due to unusual circumstances, dispersion among various tribal agencies was inevitable. The security situation of Bajaur deteriorated, and TTP purportedly began getting substantial assistance from ideologically groups in Afghanistan. In response, government started a military operation in Bajaur Agency in 2008 having name as 'Operation-Sher-Dil'. Around 8000 Frontier Corps supported by Cobra Helicopters participated in the military operation but the Pakistan Army encountered substantial opposition (Khan, 2011). However, the security forces succeeded in comparison to the militants, with over 1000 militants being killed. The command and control system of militants was specifically targeted and dismantled and it was assumed that the leaders of TTP were escaped to Afghanistan. Pakistan experienced internal displacement for the first time, but following this operation, the government facilitated the return of Bajaur tribesmen to their own homes.

Another military operation called Daraghalam was conducted in Khyber Agency in 2008 (Khalid & Roy, 2016). The persistent coercive technique was prominent in the mindset of policymakers. The purpose of the operation was to ensure the safety of vital supply routes used by NATO forces and to dismantle the hiding terrorist leader Mangal Bagh. Military conducted operation that facilitated them in establishing a supply line for the NATO forces in Afghanistan but no high-ranked leader of Mangal Bagh organization was apprehended or killed during this operation. Military had conducted multiple airstrikes in the strategically significant Tirah Valley that resulted in the killing of numerous militants and the destruction of their hideouts. The persistent conflict between insurgent factions and the aerial bombardments had forced local tribes to relocate to more secure areas (Khan, 2011).

Upon analyzing these policies, a crucial component was lacking in the strategy, namely a “Political Strategy”. Following these operations, the absence of political leadership perpetuated additional mayhem and anarchy as well as no habilitation system for tribal area caused the feelings of inferiority in tribesmen. Despite these losses, the Pakistani government remained unable to achieve peace in the tribal areas, as militants obtained assistance from other sources and thereafter became more powerful and ruthless.

### **Banning the Militant Organizations**

As a component of the Counter-Terrorism plan, Musharraf implemented a ban on militant organizations, which had propagated extremism and terrorism within Pakistan. This action was connected to increasing international pressure caused after the Indian Parliament attack 2001 (Swami, 2008). India deployed over 800,000 troops along the border with Pakistan that caused threat of a military confrontation, escalating into a new conflict with the involvement of nuclear weapons. However, Musharraf’s commitment against militant organizations defused the tensions and both countries withdrew their soldiers, effectively averting an impending war. Musharraf believed that employing force or coercive measures would affect the Kashmir issue so he displayed courage by prohibiting the Jihadi organizations and successfully convinced India to engage in discussions about Kashmir and other matters.

### **The Role of intelligence agencies**

The intelligence agencies also played a crucial role in eliminating Al-Qaeda affiliated militants from the tribal and other areas. In 2003, army successfully apprehended over 400 Al-Qaeda terrorists from FATA and significant number from other regions (Gunaratna & Nielsen, 2008). Khalid Sheikh Muhammad, the mastermind of 9/11 was also detained in Rawalpindi that yielded valuable results, as the Pakistan security forces skillfully pursued and dismantled the Al-Qaeda network within the country based on the intelligence reports. Musharraf asserted that Pakistan had made unparalleled efforts in the counter-terrorism, surpassing any other nation. Pakistan’s intelligence agencies had played a paramount role in both national and international counterterrorism endeavors, specifically in United States operations as well as collaborative operations.

### **Reformation and Regulation of Madrassas**

It was observed that several Madrassas had connections with terrorist organizations and actively endorsed and advanced their cause, as well as indoctrinated innocent individuals with extremist ideologies. Consequently, Musharraf declared suitable procedures to oversee the Madrassa system to prohibit them from militant training, recruiting, indoctrinating, and raising funds for militants. These implementations resulted in backlash and elicited a strong response from religious extremists while the main purpose of these reforms was to enhance the quality of religious education by implementing progressive methods and incorporating moderate literature (Shabir, Abbasi, & Khan, 2012). However, this was also done with the aim of curbing the rise of extremism and terrorism in madrassas of Pakistan.

The new policies restricted madrassas for registration with getting NOC in order to open a new madrassa. Furthermore, curriculum in Madrassas underwent a thorough evaluation and update and new subjects such as science and information technology were integrated. This was done to ensure strong connections with their peers in both the professional sphere and social settings. However, other countries expressed concerns that their people who get Islamic education in Pakistan may become radicalized so for alteration of this strategy, Pakistan implemented a restriction on numerous international students.

These measures were highly beneficial for Pakistan, but the presence of large number of Madrassas in country posed challenges for effectively monitoring. There are certain Madrassas that not only offered refuge and support to militant groups but also were engaged in illegal activities such as extorting funds on behalf of these organizations. Therefore, it was necessary to take actions to suppress these Madrassas that had connections with terrorists on international scale. During the analysis, it was important to note that General Musharraf’s administration was the first to implement stringent measures against this kind of Madrassas as part of his Counter-Terrorism Strategy. Perhaps Musharraf’s status as military man contributed to his fearlessness and audacity in doing such measures.

### **Lal Masjid siege**

Lal Masjid was a religious school associated with Jamia Hafsa madrassa, a madrassa for women. There was also a male madrassa located just a short distance away. In April 2007, the Mosque administration started aggression towards nearby video stores, claiming that they were distributing pornographic films, while they suspected that massage parlors were being utilized for prostitution (BBC, 2007). These attacks frequently perpetrated by the female pupils of Jamia Hafsa. In July 2007, a dispute arose when government opted to quell the student violence by dispatching police to apprehend the individuals implicated along-with Madrassa administration.

This situation resulted in a confrontation between law enforcement agencies and armed students while the Mosque officials and students adamantly declined to surrender and persistently got engaged in gunfire with the police, which caused casualties

from both sides. According to the news, this operation was an attack on a contentious pro-Taliban Mosque in ICT that resulted in a violent eight-day siege that claimed the lives of at least 58 Pakistani soldiers and seminary students.

The facts surrounding Lal Masjid were heavily influenced by political factors as this operation signaled the downfall of Musharraf rule. It is believed that he caused his own downfall by authorizing military action against Lal Masjid and removing Chief Justice Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry. The PMLQ, though they were allies, denied for Lal Masjid operation due to their strong conservative principles of avoiding confrontation with the clergy so they actively sought to distance themselves from it, which caused erosion for Musharraf's political platform.

The media compelled by the limitations resisted partly due to the widespread backing of the targeted Mosque. Two rival political parties, PMLN and PPP, aimed to discredit his step for his political elimination along with the PMLQ. The PMLN had clear objective to remove Musharraf from power while PPP adopted a nuanced strategy due to the Taliban's deliberate targeting of its partners. Subsequently, he faced confrontation from Supreme Court due to delay in its restoration process. The Supreme Court confronted Musharraf, with the support of a significant number of people and aided by the media associated with the PMLN (Ahmed & Afridi, 2014).

No one claimed responsibility for the Lal Masjid Operation of 2007 while Musharraf experienced different issues due to this. However, the facts would remain present and unchanged as it was seen that the formation of TTP occurred subsequent to the military operation. Al-Qaeda was also greatly angered because it heavily relied on Lal Masjid, where many youngsters did not consider al-Qaeda as a terrorist organization or an enemy of Pakistan. TTP, later on, demanded sole ownership of the Mosque. Surprisingly, on July 6, 2008, after one year of operation, terrorists had carried out a suicidal attack in Islamabad, resulting in 19 deaths including 15 policemen. A videocassette produced by al-Qaeda commemorated the anniversary of the destruction of Lal Masjid in which they vowed to seek revenge.

Zahid Hussain in his book observed in 2010 that Jamia Hafsa's leaders Abdul Aziz and Abdul Rashid acquired their militant beliefs from their father, Abdullah Ghazi. Abdullah Ghazi served as head cleric of Lal Masjid during Soviet-Afghan war and he established close connections with Jihadist groups. He obtained financial support and instruction to recruit militants that resulted in Lal Masjid's stronghold of militancy. Following the Taliban's triumph in Afghanistan, Abdullah Ghazi developed affiliations with al-Qaeda when in 1998 he journeyed to Kandahar to express reverence to Mullah Omar, a Jihadist revered as their spiritual guide. He brought Omar's son Abdul Rashid with him who underwent radicalization on this visit and had a one-hour meeting with Osama Bin Laden in which they addressed long-standing concerns. After that meeting Rashid recalled that he took bin Laden's glass of water and consumed from it and hoped that he would be bestowed with qualities of a warrior like Laden (Hussain, 2010).

### **Drone Attacks**

The drone attacks were commenced in 2004 when US launched an attack on Abdullah Mehsud, the head of TTP. The drones were initially launched in tribal areas, resulting in the unfortunate deaths of numerous innocent individuals as well as represented a clear infringement upon Pakistan's sovereignty (Ranjan, 2014). With Obama's victory in elections, people deliberated this as Obama had become the president of Pakistan. There was a belief that Obama's victory over Georg W. Bush resulted in numerous challenges for Pakistan as the policies of Bush led increased insecurity in Pakistan (Tiwari, 2014).

Between 2004 and 2008, 34 drone attacks were carried out while during 2008 to March 2009, the number of drone attacks increased to 46. These 84 attacks caused 513 deaths with only 14 terrorists, while the remaining were innocent civilians (O'Connell, 2009). These drones were in violation of Article 24 of UN charter. Furthermore, it was evident that these drone strikes consistently failed to provide favorable outcomes due to the continued survival of Mullah Umar and Ayman Al Zawahiri. The drone attacks were exacerbating the proliferation of terrorists that horribly intensified the level of terror and fueled animosity among the populace.

### **Political instability**

Political instability was a significant threat to Pakistan. Corruption, lawlessness, and conflicts between the military and political factions had discouraged external investors. Political factions opposed authoritarianism, but they both support war on terror because they were interested in disrupting and dismantling terrorists. Furthermore, the military and bureaucratic elites were aspired to govern the nation in accordance with their own style, while political parties resisted dictatorship. Consequently, conflicts persisted between with any intervening party reaping advantages by supporting terrorists, freedom fighters, and non-state actors. The proliferation of terrorism across the country aimed to undermine and intimidate the entire country as well as for fostering political instability.

Pak-US relationship was another factor, which posed numerous long-term problems to Pakistan's security. It was likely to disrupt future policies as previously had detrimental effects on Pakistan's security. This was particularly concerning as Pakistan was at a higher risk compared to disturbing elements. They had deliberately undermined the infrastructure for their political agenda and to strengthen their terrorist activities. This factor resulted in a tumultuous, merciless, and savage situation in South Asia Muslim population.

### **Conclusion**

The final outcome of this study highlighted the deep intricacies that characterized the security problems both domestic and regional throughout Musharraf administration. At the beginning of the period, a confluence of geopolitical changes, internal discontent, and government tactics significantly impacted the security environment of the nation. Pakistan's involvement in the War on Terror was prompted by the events of 9/11, which changed the country's regional strategy and entangled it in a complicated web of alliances and conflicts. Using a combination of military operations, economic reforms, and diplomatic

outreach, Musharraf's authoritarian government attempted to counter threats to domestic security. However, ongoing ethnic conflicts, radical religious beliefs, and a fragile civil-military balance frequently hampered their efforts. Despite the difficulties faced, the Musharraf era provides insightful knowledge for modern security policymaking. Through an analysis of the achievements and inadequacies of previous tactics, decision-makers can extract valuable insights to guide current security concerns. It is impossible to overestimate the importance of having a thorough and nuanced awareness of historical settings and sociopolitical dynamics. Going forward, maintaining stability and peace in Pakistan and the larger South Asian area will require a comprehensive strategy that tackles both domestic and external security issues. Pakistan can effectively manage the intricacies of its security environment and strive towards a more secure and prosperous future by implementing well-informed and planned policymaking.

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